



# HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

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## IM Technical Committee Meeting

By E. Wing Spooner [espooner@mt.gov](mailto:espooner@mt.gov)

The Interoperability Montana Technical Committee (IMTC) held its face-to-face monthly meeting in Helena on Monday, March 24. IMTC Chair Bob McWilliams reported that IM Governance Committee Chair, Bill Fleiner and Keith Lavender, Northrop Grumman, will be attending IMTC meetings to help keep everyone informed, since finances and technical issues go hand in hand. Bill reported that the finance sub-committee met with DES to decide which projects could be completed by the end of June to be funded by FY05 Dept. of Homeland Security (DHS) monies. Bill also said that the objective of establishing the budget was to document funding sources and complete projects based on the IMTC's funding priorities.

Scott Bradford, PSSB, distributed the latest Frequency Master Sheet and explained issues that are being worked on. Dale Osborne, MHP, reported for the Encryption Sub-Committee. Richland County is in the process of encrypting its radios and Montana Fish and Game has received bids to upgrade all of its mobile radios to encryption. Roger Smith highlighted activities going on in Bozeman, Great Falls, Helena and in Ashton, ID. Harris-Stratex design engineers will be in Montana April 9-11 to work on final implementation schedules, complete the Northern Tier and follow up on PSIC grant projects. Ray Hetherington, Wheatland County, said he is working to have the state 9-1-1 folks more involved in dispatch connectivity sub-committee meetings.

The IMTC formally established an Executive Sub-Committee consisting of Bob McWilliams, Kevin Bruski and Roger Smith to assist with day-to-day decision making. Discussion took place about using a Site Sign-Off Document to clarify when a site changes ownership. It was decided to have the IM Governance Committee address this issue. The IMTC also approved a 60 kW generator for the Scout Hill site. In addition, Roger Smith, Jack Spillman and Scott Bradford were assigned the task of compiling a preliminary plan for the Dept. of Homeland Security FY08 investment justification, due May 1. The group also discussed System Administration Motorola Training.

The next IMTC meeting will be held in conjunction with the Governor's Summit on Emergency Preparedness at the Holiday Inn in Billings at 8:00 am on Thurs., April 24.

## Western Consortium Meeting

By Pete Mohan [pmohan@mt.gov](mailto:pmohan@mt.gov)

The Western Interoperability Communications Consortium (WICC) met at the Ravalli County Courthouse in Hamilton at 10:00 am on March 25.

Public Safety Services Bureau  
111 N. Last Chance Gulch, Suite 4-A; Arcade Building  
P O Box 200117  
Helena MT 59620-0117

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Consortium Project Director, George Gupton, reported on the recent Interoperability Montana Project Directors (IMPD) and the IM Governance Committee meetings. Members discussed the Interlocal Agreements (ILA) with favorable remarks and recommended approval by all members.

Members welcomed Assistant Director, Gary Taylor, and Dispatch Coordinator, Rozyln Haley, from the University of Montana's Office of Public Safety and discussed the methodology of this jurisdiction becoming integrated into the project.

Board members discussed site requirements in Mineral, Ravalli and Sanders counties to tie into the IM Project and the regional aspects of tying into the Idaho system. Tom Smith, Northrop Grumman, discussed the latest site status with the group.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 20 at 10:00 am in Polson at a location to be determined.

## Tri-County Interoperable Consortium

By Pete Mohan [pmohan@mt.gov](mailto:pmohan@mt.gov)

The Tri-County Interoperable Consortium (SWIP/Tri-County) meeting was conducted on March 25 in Helena. Vice Chairman Bill Fleiner chaired the meeting. Consortium members discussed the Boulder Hill, Bull Mountain, Grassy Mountain and Limestone communications sites and how the sites tie in to other consortia and partnership agency sites within the Interoperability Montana (IM) Project.

The group decided that a FEMA Assistance to Fire Fighters regional grant application is the best method for funding equipment at the sites. Grant development was discussed and courses of action were decided upon for quick implementation. Tom Smith, Northrop Grumman, submitted site reports and county representatives discussed them. The consortium is nearly finished with narrow banding frequency licensing. Programming and installation efforts are on track.

Bill encouraged members to attend the Interoperability Montana retreat on April 24-25 in Billings in lieu of an April Tri-County Consortium meeting, and elected representatives were encouraged to attend.

The next meeting will be on May 28 at 10:00 am at the Department of Corrections Annex Conference Room located behind 515 N. Sanders St.

## Eastern Tier Consortium Meeting

By E. Wing Spooner [espooner@mt.gov](mailto:espooner@mt.gov)

The Eastern Tier Interoperability Consortium (ETIC) met in Miles City on Wed., March 26. Chief Alan Michaels gave a brief history of the Interoperability Montana (IM) Project since several new faces were present. He also explained the Interlocal Agreement (ILA) process that is being used to create the IM Project a separate, legal entity. Chief Michaels reported that the

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finance sub-committee has been working on compiling a budget, and he explained the importance of having a complete and accurate budget as well as the ability to track funding sources. All infrastructure and equipment requests are prioritized by the IM Technical Committee (IMTC) and requests are taken to the finance sub-committee. The IM Project Directors (IMPD) then approves the request.

Roger Smith, Montana Highway Patrol, gave a brief overview of how trunking works and its benefits. Roger also explained how efficiencies are being gained through partnerships and collaboration.

Butch Renders reviewed a handout of Eastern Tier tower sites that detailed budgets and funding sources. A second handout showed the budget and actual expenditures for each consortium in Montana as well as for the entire IM Project. Wing Spooner announced the website link, <http://interop.mt.gov>, where maps of the consortia and the network design are located. A copy of the July 2007 issue of the *Montana Policy Review* that is devoted to interoperability in Montana also is on the web as well as information about all consortia.

Denny Palmer, Richland County, gave a brief report on the FEMA Assistance to Fire Fighters grant regional application. Discussion ensued about whether or not local entities can also submit FEMA grant requests outside of the regional application. The consensus seemed to be that local grant requests will not directly compete with the regional application. However, it was noted that two separate grants should not request the same equipment for the same agency. However, further research is needed on this question. Derrick Rodgers, Miles City fire Chief, reported that the Miles City Fire Department is submitting a FEMA grant for local radio needs.

The group was informed about the upcoming IM Retreat on April 24 and 25 in Billings. Commissioners were encouraged to attend.

The next meeting will be Thurs., April 30 at 10:00 am at the Law Enforcement Training Center, 440 Colorado Blvd., in Glendive.

## Big Sky 11 Consortium Meeting

By E. Wing Spooner [espooner@mt.gov](mailto:espooner@mt.gov)

The Big Sky 11 Interoperability Consortium met Thurs., March 27, at the Yellowstone County Courthouse with a gathering of the technical committee. Discussion took place about the Subscriber Unit Acceptance Criteria as well as the fleet mapping process. Ray Hetherington, Wheatland County, emphasized the importance of making sure radio inventories and frequency lists are up to date in anticipation of fleet mapping.

The consortium also reviewed budget sheets that listed expenditures, anticipated budgets and funding sources for consortium projects. Discussion took place about the city's 800 MHz system and Nextel Communications' mandate to re-band it and provide replacement radios in order to eliminate interference issues.

The next consortium meeting will begin at 10:00 am at the Yellowstone County Fire Station, 2305 8th Ave N., in Billings on Thurs., May 1.

## Upcoming Meetings

### March 31

*IM Finance Sub-Committee*

Helena • 9:00 am - Noon

Northrop Grumman Offices, 2401 Colonial Drive

*IM Governance Committee*

Helena • Noon - 5:00 pm

DOC Annex Conf. Rm.; Behind 515 N. Sanders St.

### April 1

IM Project Directors (IMPD) Meeting

Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

State Capitol Room 172

### April 2

Fleet Mapping Sub-Committee

Helena • 9:00 am

Law Enforcement Center, 221 Breckenridge

### April 2 ~ CANCELLED

Central Montana Consortium (CMICC)

Great Falls • 10:00 am - Cancelled

### April 3

Northern Tier (NTIP)

Havre • 9:00 am

Great Northern Inn, 1345 1<sup>st</sup> St.

### April 15-16

Western Border Interoperability Working Group Mtg.

Lethbridge, Alberta

### April 17

I-15/90 Corridor Consortium

Butte • 10:00 am

Chamber of Commerce Conf. Rm.; 1000 George St.

### April 21-24

Governor's Emergency Preparedness Conference

Billings • Holiday Inn

Register at: <http://eu.montana.edu/preparedness/>

### April 24

Interoperability Montana (IM) Technical Committee

Billings • 8:00 am

Holiday Inn

### April 24-25

Interoperability Montana (IM) Retreat

Billings • Holiday Inn

Register at: <http://eu.montana.edu/preparedness/>